

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SP-02 AID-05 EB-07 NSC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3658

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, UK, JA

SUBJECT: GOJ AGREES "MODIFY AUTOMOBILE EXPORT POLICY TO UK

REF: TOKYO 12691

1. ACCORDING TO LOCAL PRESS REPORTS, WHICH HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED BY BRITISH EMBASSY, VISITING BRITISH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE PETER SHORE AND MITI HEAD KOMOTO REACHED "UNDERSTANDING" LAST WEEK, FOLLOWING SECOND MEETING, ON LEVEL OF JAPANESE AUTOMOBILE EXPORTS TO UK FOR AUGUST-DECEMBER 1975 PERIOD. BRITISH SIDE FOR ITS PART EXPLAINED REASONS FOR PRESENT DIFFICULTIES OF UK AUTO INDUSTRY, AND JAPANESE SIDE EXPLAINED WHY AUGUST-DECEMBER 1975 AUTO EXPORTS TO UK ARE NOT EXPECTED TO SURPASS 1974 EXPORT LEVEL FOR SAME PERIOD. TARGET FIGURE OF NOT MORE THAN 50,000 UNITS, WHICH APPROXIMATES 1974 AUGUST-DECEMBER EXPORT LEVEL OF 47,000 - 50,000, WAS APPARENTLY MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY.

2. BRITISH EMBASSY ALSO CONFIRMED THAT BOTH SIDES AGREED THAT JAPANESE-BRITISH AUTO INDUSTRIES WILL DISCUSS 1976 LEVEL OF JAPANESE EXPORTS PRIMARILY ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE BASIS OF ACTUAL 1975 EXPORTS.

3. DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN TWO SIDES MAY BE ATTRIBUTED TO FACT THAT, ACCORDING TO JAPANESE EXPORT FIGURES, JAPANESE CAR EXPORTS TO THE UK FOR THE FIRST SEVEN MONTHS OF 1975 WERE UP 65 PERCENT OVER THE SAME PERIOD A YEAR AGO (APPROX. 77,000 VS. 46,000 UNITS). DURING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1975, JAPANESE AUTOMOBILES ACCOUNTED FOR 38.7 PERCENT OF IMPORTED CARS SOLD IN THE UK AND APPROXIMATELY 10 PERCENT OF ALL AUTOMOBILES SOLD.

4. EMBASSY COMMENT: INTERESTING FEATURE OF RECENT DISCUSSIONS WAS UK'S ATTEMPT OT EXTRACT "VOLUNTARY EXPORT CONTROL" OFFER FROM GOJ. MITI MINISTER KOMOTO, APPARENTLY WITH EYE ON OTHER EXPORT MARKETS, WAS FIRMLY OPPOSED TO USE THIS TERM LEST GOJ BE ASKED OFFER SAME TREATMENT TO OTHER COUNTRIES. GOJ INSTEAD PREFERS USE OF TERM "MODIFIED" AUTO SALES POLICY. ACCORDING GOJ WAY OF THINKING, "MODIFIED" POLICY MAY INCLUDE VOLUNTARY SALES RESTRAINT DECIONS ARRIVED AT BY INDIVIDUAL JAPANESE AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURERS (REFTEL).
SHOESMITH

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